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include, fish, goat, chicken, hare, mutton, buck, and even pork. Apparently carrion is never eaten. The flesh of the deer may be eaten but not that of the tiger. The villager is an adept at preparing vegetables for his curries, and throughout the year depends largely upon the following according to the seasons: *sags* of various kinds; egg plants; pumpkins and gourds; okra; potatoes, both ordinary and sweet; onions; roots of various plants; and corn on the cob roasted until it is brown.

The community feast, or feasts, given to a relatively large group on special occasions, are things which help to break the monotony of diet. Community feasts are usually paid for out of the proceeds of fines levied by the *panch*. An individual also may give a feast as a thank-offering, or at child-birth, at the time of a wedding, or at death. One of the favourite foods is said to be a preparation described below known as *bara*, and is served at every feast. If some social event should make a feast obligatory, and if the person concerned should fail to provide the expected meal, the *panch* brings pressure upon him to do so. If he still fails, the person is boycotted for a period. The usual menu at such a feast includes rice and *chapatis*, pulse, vegetable curry, *chatni*, *bara* and if they can be afforded, meats of various kinds. Kols drink milk when it is available and apparently do not feel that all milk should be kept for the calf, as some Munda tribes believe. Milk is also used in the preparation of certain special foods, such as *khir*, which is used for the child's first feeding. See below.

Foods are usually divided into two classes: *pakka* and *kachha*. The former kind is cooked in *ghi* or *ghi* is used in its preparation, and the latter is simply cooked with water. *Ghi*, like other products from the sacred cow, protects from impurity. While caste Hindus have numerous restrictions in connection with this classification, the Kols do not seem to be particular in this regard. They will take food cooked by "clean" Hindu castes, but never from those castes which they consider below them, such as Chamars, Mahars, Dhobis, Basors, and Doms. Nowhere Kols seemed to be starved nor emaciated. Apparently, they have enough to keep them in fairly good health, though not in abundance. We did not find stout people among them.

The main food-stuffs are listed below. In an average Kol house all of these are probably not found at any one time, but they are those used when available:

Grains: Wheat, rice, millet (in northern areas).

Pulses: Black pulse (*Phaseolus radiatus*). Red and yellow types (*Cajanus indicus* and *Dolichos lablab*).

Oils: Mustard oil usually from *Guisotia abyssinica*. Sweet oil or.

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on the *sil* salt and some spices are usually added. The dough is then moulded by hand into cakes of various sizes which are fried in sweet (*til*) oil or in clarified butter. *Rora* is usually eaten in this form though occasionally, if curd is available, it is soaked in that until soft. 252

Dahi is a form of sour milk, though a particular strain of bacteria seems to be required. A bit of old *dahi* is put into the new milk which has been sweetened and to which possibly a little sliced green chili has been added. This is set aside until the *dahi* is formed.

Khir. This is made by boiling rice in milk over a slow fire. Sugar is added to sweeten. When the mixture becomes creamy, chopped cocoanut, pistachio, and *ilachi* seeds are added to taste.

Batasa. Sugar is boiled with water until there is a very thick syrup. This is poured into a cocoanut shell which has a small hole in the bottom through which the syrup may drip. This is allowed to drip on cloth or paper forming small balls of various sizes. The product turns out to be a small whitish ball, spongy and very sweet.

FOOD TABOOS. There are certain things which Kols never eat. The use of beef and carrion is universally tabooed. The latter is eaten only by outcastes, and beef is not taken in deference to their Hindu neighbours. It was noted that pork is among the foods used. In Hinduized centres it is no longer eaten as a regular dish, but it is still partaken of at festival times when a young pig may be offered to the goddess and ceremonially eaten. Nothing that creeps on the ground should be eaten. 262 [564] [178 782]

Among other animals which they never kill nor eat are found the names of the parrot, sparrow, crow, kite and *galgal* (*Acridotheres tristis*).

INTOXICANTS. There is evidence to show that the Kols are not so addicted to the use of intoxicants as they were in previous years. At times of religious ceremonies liquor is still used quite freely and no penalty is attached. In one centre we were informed that the *panchayat* fines any man who is caught drinking liquor, and that they had totally abolished its use in that village. In other places they were not so successful, and yet there was a standard penalty of Rs. 10 or a community feast, when, in the judgment of the *panch* the circumstances warranted it. 273 [184 623 681]

Contact with city life seems to increase the use of liquor; and Kol dwellers in Jubbulpore have distinctly less feeling against it and more often indulge in its use than do the people living in the village. [369]

As far as we could learn there was no record of the Kols resorting to the illicit distillation of intoxicants. When they need liquor for their [443]

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622 community and has come to be recognised as such largely by his personal worth, wisdom and character. There is no formal election of the head-men; they were recognized as such by a kind of social [624] gravitation. Usually the *Mahats* has an assistant known as the *Chhariberdar*, who does most of the necessary running around. The *Mahats* is not the sole authority and is not empowered to act or even to make decisions of any importance without first consulting the more influential heads of the community. But he usually takes the initiative in calling together the leaders of the local group if factors requiring a meeting come to his knowledge, or if a definite request for it is made.

623 The ultimate authority of the local group rests with the village *panch* or *panchayat*, literally 'the council of five'. The *panch*, however, is not to be thought of as limited to five members only, for it is usually composed of all the influential adult males of the community. They must possess, in the words of the Kols, *"dharam aur dhan"*—piety and property—if they are to be regarded worthy of a place in the *panchayat*. There are however, no elections to the Kol *panchayats*. The leader may or may not recognize one as a member of the group, and while others may attend and even take part in the discussions, they have no right to decide on the ultimate issue.

Practically all major and minor issues affecting the life of the community are decided by the *panch* which thus forms a council for the arbitration of matters pertaining to the community. Its power is really remarkable and the decisions of the *panchayat* are rigidly respected. It is dangerous for a member of the community to go against its advice [626] or decision, for in most cases the *panch* can bring to bear upon the recalcitrant such strong social pressure that he is practically cut off from his community, which means that he is a man without a country or a caste. Personally he may be cut off from all social intercourse, from the use of the well and other village amenities; he is not invited to any functions and is treated as an outcaste. But worse yet, he can neither get his children married, nor admitted into the tribe.

Some of the matters which a Kol *panchayat* deals with include 623 the following:
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1. Eating and drinking with other castes if such has been forbidden or is against custom.
2. Sexual abberations not approved by the usual Kol practices.
3. Marriage matters: selecting the bride or the bridegroom if there is any difficulty or dispute; arbitration of disputes over financial aspects of the marriage. Irregular unions dealt with and suitable penalties determined.

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4. Divorce and the care of the children.
5. Failure to provide adequately for members of the household. 626
6. Debt, drink, betting and quarrels.
7. Injury to, or the killing of animals which are considered sacred.
8. Defying the Kol social traditions, not listed above.
9. Deciding upon contributions of money or supplies for group religious observances.
10. Property and inheritance when there is a dispute or doubt.

Should the decision of the *panch* not be accepted in some serious dispute, particularly where real property is involved, the matter may be taken to the civil courts. While this method is open and often threatened, it is seldom resorted to. Kols are not often found in the courts, for there is always the chance that they will lose the case and also have to face social boycott of the *panch* for not heeding its decision and advice. In some matters the *panch* itself may advise going to court. If there is a grave offense, such as murder or theft, the police [625] step in and the matter is taken entirely out of the hands of the community. Nevertheless the Kols boast that they are law abiding and that most sections of them have had no police record whatsoever. Enquiry from the police confirmed this claim; in this respect Kols give no anxiety and the police seldom trouble them when some crime has been committed in the larger villages of which Kols form a part.

When a penalty is decided upon the *panch* sees that it is enforced. 623
If the person to be disciplined is amenable to the *panch* the penalty is 626
usually either a fine or a feast. If the latter, the person must feed the
leaders of the community and thus express regret for his act; or if a 681
fine is imposed, such, if realized, is usually used for a feast. In the
past it is said that the fines were used for the purchase of alcoholic liquors and drinks, and in some places still are; but now-a-days this seems to be largely abandoned. The fine in some cases might even amount to fifty rupees, but for a Kol this is an excessive amount and it is unlikely that so much is ever declared under ordinary circumstances. Five rupees or so is the usual amount for ordinary violations.

INTER-VILLAGE COUNCILS. The general social solidarity of the Kols 628
is further shown by the fact that under the more stable conditions of 623
village life, no single village stands alone in making an important deci-
sion affecting one of its members, for there are inter-village federations. 631
Sarat Chandra Roy also reports this among the Kharias.[1] In several

1 *The Kharias*, p. 178.

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623 628 631 centres we found evidence of this inter-village organization. In Malhar there was a *panchayat* composed, theoretically, from members of seven castes; but Kols have inter-village councils of their own and the leaders of each village, along with a few other leading men, occasionally come together when important matters are under consideration. Such a meeting is called only for something which seems vitally important and affects the total life of the community. Their sense of social solidarity is so acute that a matter affecting one is regarded as affecting all. Near Katni there is an inter-village organization which includes twenty to thirty Kol communities, and this federation is said to be very active in matters pertaining to the life of the Kols of that area.

623 628 631 203 Sometimes the heads of the villages in a federation are consulted by sending around a sort of circular, giving information about the case and instructing them to think over the decision which should be eventually reached. Occasionally they are then and there asked to pronounce their opinion. In Barela we were in a house to which had just come a communication, originating in Barela, and which was being circularized among the villages of the federation to which Barela belonged. It was [212] written for the Kols by the village writer of the Kayasth caste and we were able to secure a copy of it. The circular affords a good example of the way in which certain matters are settled, and shows that the matter of eating is serious enough to be called to the attention of the larger group. The translation of the document is as follows:

From Barela *Panch*.

Sri,

To

All the kings (members) of the various *panchayats*, we (the members of the local *panchayats*) send our very respectful greetings. We would respectfully make this complaint that people under your jurisdiction (*i.e.* Kols) eat the flesh of swine cooked by the Kumhars (potters). If this is so why should we not start the pipe with them (have social intercourse with them). You get the animal killed by the Kumhárs and then wash it with water that has already been touched by them (and so polluted), and if a girl becomes pregnant you punish the family by the imposition of a fine or a caste dinner.

If these are facts please admit them or if things are otherwise, say so and make your mark (signature). Also

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give your opinion whether you are agreeable to social intercourse with the Kumhars.

This letter should be circulated in the following villages :

1. Kharara Ghat : the whole *panch*, Sahmat, Dhannu, Sunnu.
2. Bargaon : the whole *panch*.
3. Matawar Do.
4. Bharda Do.
5. Panagar Do.
6. Umer Mohuiya.
7. Jatma.

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This letter, without naming the offenders, is a complaint that somewhere in this particular Kol community social intercourse with the potter caste has been allowed without penalty. The Kumhars are among the lowest untouchables and no Kol should eat or drink with them. The *panch* of that particular village was so lax that the matter even went as far as a Kol girl becoming pregnant, due, presumably, to this association. They did not watch over the welfare of the group and began to check it only after it had gone as far as that. To the minds of the complainants the association with the Kumhars should never have been permitted and the rhetorical question is asked, if Kols should not have full intercourse with them, implying that to do so would be to degrade the Kols to the level of the Kumhars. This, of course, would be absurd, but is just what the other *panch* is allowing and so it should be checked. The letter attempts to put a stop to this and gives an example of the way such matters are sometimes handled.

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TOTEMISTIC ELEMENTS IN THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION. The phenomenon of totemism is widespread among the Munda tribes of India, and in many cases it still forms a fundamental feature of the social organization particularly in connection with marriage, kinship, and sexual relations. In certain cases, as with the Oraons,[1] there is a definitely intermediate stage, and endogamy is becoming the rule, but the clans among the more primitive tribes are still exogamous. Among some of the latter type, the Korwas and Birhors[2], for example, the totemistic organization is still quite intact ; in contrast, the Hill Bhuiyas of Orissa and the Juangs of Keonjhar, both Munda tribes, have at the present day no totemistic organization.[3] Although

1 Roy, S. C., *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur*, p. 324 ff.
2 Roy, S. C., *The Birhors*, Chapter IV.
3 Roy, S. C., *The Kharias*, pp. 148, 148.

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583 migrate to a place where nothing is known of their history, for if
626 they should try to remain they cannot enter into the life of any community of that area unless they cast their lot with the lowest of the low.

583 The above form of the elopement marriage does not have the same
586 standing as the regular forms. If such a union should break up, and
623 the woman go to live with another man, the first man has no right to make a formal complaint to the *panch*, nor can he claim her nor any compensation for her. The *panch* takes no responsibility for irregular unions and this fact is a real deterrent. Marriage would thus seem to have the marks of a contract; it binds the two persons and gives certain proprietory rights which are enforced by the community.

583 The second type of elopement marriage attempts to regularize
585 the procedure after a couple has eloped. In this manner a control
837 over such cases is exercised, and certain obligations must be met or
623 there is a severe social penalty. If a boy runs off with a girl already married, who has also been through the *gauna*[1] part of the total cycle, but who has not become the actual property of her husband, he is required by the *panch* to refund to the party to whom the girl was first married all the expenses in connection with the *lagan*, the *sadi* and the *gauna*. This is a very heavy burden which few would undertake to face, for it may amount to as much as a hundred rupees. And even if he is able to pay he still has to feast the *panch*, and they see that he does it well. Following all this the regular marriage ceremony must be performed with its additional costs and obligations, before the couple are allowed to live together. This makes such an elopement a very costly affair, and the *panch* is in the position absolutely to enforce these penalties.

[584] If the *gauna* has not yet occurred and the girl elopes with another boy, all he has to do is to pay a penalty to the *panch*, but before they are allowed to live together the regular *sadi* must be performed. No *gauna* is thereafter necessary and they begin to cohabit. The regulations are thus much more severe if the *gauna* is passed than if the elopement occurred before it. There are variations in procedure, but this seems to be the custom.

114 2. *The Recognized Form of Marriage* (*Biwah*, *Biyah*). The
184 description which follows is one compiled from investigations made in
583 many places. When we first learned of the marriage customs of the
584 Kols who lived close to Jubbulpore, we thought that the customs

1 See page 93.

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among the Kols living out in the jungles and away from larger centres would be simpler. We were therefore surprised by how consistently various groups gave us similar information. It should be noted that it is not claimed that these customs are peculiar to the Kols. Investigation among the simple village people of Hindu background will probably show that all over this area there is a great similarity in the marriage customs, the details may vary, but not the main outlines. 114 184 583 584

(1) *Selection of the Girl.* When a father considers it time to arrange a marriage for his son it is he who should take the initiative. The first thing he should do is to make some private preliminary enquiries. It is against the custom for the parents of the girl to make any direct advances. In this type of marriage neither the boy nor the girl has anything to say concerning his or her future mate. It is entirely in the hands of the elders. The boy's father may ask some relatives in another village to be on the lookout for a suitable girl, and he will consult the *panch* of his own village to see if any one of them knows of a girl who would make a suitable match for his son. As a result two or three names are suggested as possibilities. The next thing that is ordinarily done is to try to catch a glimpse of the girl without her parents knowing about it. It is best if this can be done by the boy's father, but he may send some trusted member of the *panch* to carry out the investigations for him. If the results are satisfactory, the boy's father reports to his *panch* and asks them if there is any objection to such a marriage. This is done to guard against a marriage which would be objectionable from any angle. The *panch* is usually pretty well posted on matters of relationship, and its opinion, in the absence of written records (for such are never kept by Kols), is authoritative. The father of the boy then arranges to see the girl's father privately, and when he goes he usually takes three or four of his friends from his village with him. In the interview that follows he does not come to the point immediately, but may talk about general matters for some time before bringing up the main question. Mutual enquiries are made concerning the status of the two families, the health of the children, etc. The friends of the father vouch for the accuracy and truth of his statements. If both parties find themselves in accord and if the girl's father is willing to give his daughter, the matter is then with the girl's father and it is he who now consults his *panch* and makes any private enquiries that he sees fit. Up till this time the matter is considered as strictly private and if either of the parties is not satisfied with any of the details and does not wish to follow it up the matter may be dropped without prejudice. 584 623 [217]

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food made by boiling the pulse and the rice together. When this is [262]
prepared she offers each of the male guests a portion of it and they in
turn give her from two to four annas which she is allowed to keep for
her own use. Following this there is a big feast at the boy's house
and the night is spent in chatting, singing and dancing.

(5) *Raman* or *Rawna*: Final Break with her Family. There now remains one more thing, which is the simplest of all to do: to bring the bride back for good. The *raman* is the last part of the cycle and is the taking possession of the girl and the bringing her for the last time to the bridegroom's house. The time for this is set by the *pandit* and there is said to be very little ceremony or no ceremony at all. The bridegroom simply goes with one or two male friends and the girl is brought back to his home in a *palki* and "they live happily ever after." She is now a member of the new household but may [592] come and go at will between the two places.

3. WIDOW REMARRIAGE: (*Kari hui*; *Path*). It is nevertheless 587
well recognized that a widow may be married again though for the
Kols such unions are not marriages in the strict sense. We were often [581]
told that while a man may be married more than once, a woman can
be married not more than once.

The Kols recognize two possible forms of widow marriage: a [583]
widower marrying a widow and a bachelor taking a widow as his wife.
The latter form is the least common. Some say that a union like this
should never be dignified by the term marriage, for while a Kol bachelor [836
may "keep" a widow he may never marry her and the union has no 581]
legal standing. Others call it but half a marriage. Such a liason is
never allowed if the Kol bachelor is living in his parents' home; it is
only after he leaves the home that such a thing is possible. As long [623]
as this widow is kept by him the *panch* sees that he does not contract
a real marriage with anyone else.

There are, however, traces of a sort of legalization of this procedure, 587
but this really consists in first making the Kol a widower! If he wishes 588
to marry the widow he must first consult the *panch*. They will usually [623]
do their best to try to dissuade him, but if he persists they tell him what
he will have to do in the way of penalties. If he is willing it has to be
ascertained whether the girl also is agreeable. If she is not, the thing
is off, but the Kol youth would probably not have made the request
without being sure of her consent. The *panch* then arranges a mock
wedding for him, and he is "married" to some inanimate thing. There
are several forms possible; one is that the bachelor should be made

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587 to perform the *bhowar* (circumambulation) seven times about a silver
588 or a gold ring fastened to a *nagrohan* stick smeared with *sendur*. This marries him to the ring. Immediately after this procedure he should be anointed with sweet oil mixed with *haldi*—a sign that the "wife" has died and that he is now a widower. He may then put black glass bangles on the widow, and after giving a feast as directed by the *panch* he may take the widow into his home without shame and as if with the permission of the community. Roy has noted a similar custom, only that the bachelor is married to a brass *lota* or a flower.[1] He however, says nothing of the bachelor being made a widower.

587 This type of marriage is very unusual, the more common type of widow marriage being between a real widower and a widow. It may be said in passing that a Kol widower may marry a virgin, and that if this is done the regular form of marriage is resorted to in full.

When a Kol widower wishes to marry a certain widow he should
587 first take the matter up with his *panch*. They look into the matter of
623 relationships and the like, and deal with it on its merits. If it is agreed upon, some one from the *panch* is commissioned to go to the place where the widow is living (probably with her relatives), and through her female relatives make enquiry to see if she would welcome this match. If she is willing and her *panch* has no objection, the way is clear. The widower is told by the *panch* what he will have to do by way of a feast, and this he must do before he is allowed to proceed further. A *barat* is made up and the widower and his party go to the village of the widow where they stay for three days and go through the general procedure as in the case of the regular marriage, without, however, building a *marhwa* or the like, and the general festivities are limited to dancing, singing and eating. The widower must bear all the expenses, none being borne by the widow or her relatives. On the third day the *panch* of her village is called together and certain questions are asked as to their intentions. Upon satisfactory answers they are made to sit together and often they are anointed with oil and vermilion is put on their foreheads. The man is asked to put five black glass bangles on each wrist of the widow and they are considered married.
[574 The party leaves soon after this and there is no ceremony that would
554] correspond to the *gauna* nor *reman*. They go to the man's village where they must feed the community before they are considered to be in good standing.

585 Marriage Costs. The cost of a Kol wedding is a great financial
511 strain on the parties. Both groups have to pay a part of the costs.

1 Roy, S. C., *Oraon Religion and Customs*, p. 176.

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595 an economic asset. If there should be two or more women in the family, one of whom is married and the other just kept, their respective rights were said to depend solely upon the will of the husband and it was not admitted that any of them had greater rights than the others. Their children have equal rights and no discrimination is made between [428] them. If the wife is barren and the other has sons, the property upon his death reverts to the sons. If both "wives" have sons it is divided at death according to the husband's expressed wish or by a decision of the *panchayat*.

[834] We did not find much sexual laxity among the Kols; but the Hindus assert, whether from knowledge or prejudice it is hard to say, that the sexual relations of the Kols are very loose. A Malguzar reported that in some villages under his jurisdiction where Kols happened to be in the majority he knew of at least one case of a Kol woman having several [837] husbands, a sort of polyandry, and that the men frequently exchanged wives.

586 DIVORCE. It is not uncommon for a man and his wife to separate but as long as this separation is not sanctioned by the *panchayat* 623 it involves certain disabilities. The *panchayat* never takes the initia- 692 tive nor does it advise or suggest divorce—rather the opposite—but it has to act if the separation is to have official sanction. The usual grounds for separation and divorce are:

1. Sterility of the wife
2. Sexual unchastity of either
3. Quarrelsomeness in the home
4. Laziness resulting in the neglect of household duties and support of the family
5. Any tendencies such as thievery, frequent absences from home without apparent reasons, and the like

There are numerous variations in the process of securing this separation. It is usually considered more difficult for a man to get rid of his wife than it is for the wife to get rid of her husband. The matter is first officially brought to the attention of the local *panchayat* by either of the aggrieved parties. In some cases the local *panch* has full authority, but in Maihar State we found that if, after investigation, the local *panch* thought there was a good case for divorce, the matter [184 is referred to an intercaste *panchayat*; one which should include 564] members from seven different groups or castes. This seems to be an exception, and when asked what castes could act together they mentioned only three: Kol, Kurmi and Chamar.

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If the husband is the complainant he tells the *panch* his grievances, and brings specific charges against his wife. Others present may confirm his charges if they believe them to be true. He states his desire and his particular intention in this case. It should be noted that the decision of the *panchayat* is not absolutely binding on the parties. If the *panch* decides that the man is in the right and if he gets his hoped-for decision everything is satisfactory for him; if not he may go against their decision, but it will not be without a fine or a feast of some kind to atone for it. If the woman is also present and if she wishes she may make her own defence, although if another defends her it must be done by a male member of her family. If the charges are admitted either by the woman or her representative the matter is easily settled, for the *panchayat* will allow him to divorce her without any penalty. If the woman is present she is then brought to the centre of the circle and a member of the *panch* orders her husband to go to her and remove seven times the portion of the *sari* covering her head; this is the sign of the dissolution of the marriage. She is not required to remove her glass bangles which are the real signs of marriage. These are broken, however, by the man with whom she goes to live (as most of the cases seem to involve a man), and he gives her new bangles in their place.

If the woman brings the charge against her husband, or if she is favoured in case he brings it against her, and the husband does not accept the *panch's* ruling, he may still dismiss her from his house and keep, but he must pay a penalty. In Maihar and Rewa we were informed that the decision was not final until the matter had been presented to an officer called *Mahata*, who is paid Rs. 1-4-0 for his judgment and must give the final assent. He is looked upon as a government servant, but his post was said to be hereditary.

If the woman should leave her husband and go to another man, the *panchayat* insists that the man taking her must pay a fine, while the former husband has no blame attached to him. Nevertheless if the wife was regularly married to her first husband, the man who takes her not only has to pay the fine but also must return to her former husband the amount of money that the latter paid as the bride price when first they were married. One group told us that if the wife wanted to go away for other reasons than to marry a man, she is free to do so and the *panchayat* does not interfere, nor is any fine involved. The complications begin, however, if she should want to marry again; it is then that the *panchayat* steps in. If the woman refuses to recognize this and if she should try to run away with another man, the *panchayat* advises that the matter be taken to the civil courts where

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586 623 692 the claim may be made that the woman is stolen. Judgment has been secured on this basis, and so most Kols prefer to pay the fine and not take chances in the court. This also tends to prevent a too easy divorce.

In regard to the children it was said that should the *panchayat* agree in favour of the husband, the children must go to him, with the exception that a mother may keep a nursing child. But when the nursing period is over and the child is weaned it must be handed over to the father. If she should begin to live with another man it must be given up at once. On the other hand should the man be proved a renegade and the *panch* decide that the woman is in the right she is allowed to keep the children, the property and the possessions. He is "driven out" with nothing but his personal effects. She is not required to uncover her head and nothing of a similar nature is required of him for he is simply told to *jao*—go! The woman however, should publicly say that she renounces him.

182 58 Such is a brief survey of the marriage customs of the Kols. Through these observances it is possible to trace a strong sense of social solidarity, and of the care exercised by both *panchayats* in adjudging the suitability of the matches. By the imposition of penalties which seek to discourage irregular unions the *panch* attempts to steady things. At the time of weddings there is a feeling of brotherhood and good fellowship, and in certain respects the wedding is the most important of all the social rites. Apart from its attendant ceremonies there is little of interest and excitement in the life of the average Kol. While there may be many instances of conscious or unconscious borrowing from Hindu sources, nevertheless this is not of recent occurrence, and probably goes back for hundreds of years, so far, indeed, that the Kols believe it to be their very own and assert: "These are the things we do, we do not know why we do them, but they are done by us."

l:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

ORPHANS. Concerning treatment of orphans and provision for their care, there seems to be different practices according to locality. In most centres the matter resolves about the question whether the orphan or orphans concerned have relatives or not. 736

1. Where there are relatives it is the father's brother who is the responsible party. He is the one to arrange for the orphans of either sex. If there be a girl of marriageable age and no arrangement has been made for her, the paternal uncle will at once try to find a suitable match for her. Other relatives, and members of the *panch* are called in to help decide the question. If the children are still young, the uncle will attempt to provide for them. It may be, if he is able, that he will take the children into his own home; or they may be divided up among relatives who are able and willing to care for them. Any property belonging to the family is divided among the children and goes with them wherever they are placed. 604 736 623

2. If there are no relatives, it falls to the *panch* to provide for the orphaned children. Before actual provision is made, a thorough search for relatives is undertaken, and if any are located, the children are turned over to them. If not, the *panch* must decide how to care for the orphans and to whom they should be given. A certain family may be appointed as guardians of the children, and to help this family, the *panch* may order a collection to be taken from the Kol community. 623 736 429 652

The child taken into the home of a family, which is not related to the adopted child, is nevertheless considered as one of the family and the other children, if any, as his or her brothers and sisters. If the child be a boy, he cannot marry a female member of the family adopting him. Adoption generally occurs only within the limits of the *kurhi*. Records have been found of occasions that have arisen which necessitated the adoption of Thakuriyas into Rautiya families. This is unusual, but if the adopted child be a girl, the problem is relatively simple: when she becomes of marriageable age, she can be married to a Rautiya under the rule of hypergamy. If the child be a boy, the problem of his marriage is much more complicated as he cannot be married within the Rautiya *kurhi*. The family must search for a Thakuriya girl. One might think that a Thakuriya boy brought up in a Rautiya family might pass for a Rautiya, but close watch is kept by all concerned on the history of people, and it would practically be impossible to pass off the child as a Rautiya. Kols claim that they very rarely take a member of another *kurhi* into the family, while a non-Kol is never taken into a Kol family as an adopted member. 597 736

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

428 578 623 692

Should a dispute arise over the division of the property the matter must be settled by the *panch*. They will probably distribute it as equally as possible among the sons. Should this not be satisfactory to all concerned the sons have the right to appeal to the law courts of the land and have the matter settled there. Among Kols this is seldom, if ever, done.

421 562 591

The female members of the family do not enjoy equal rights with the males. A girl, when married, loses her membership in her family, and becomes a member of the new home. When she goes to live with her husband she takes nothing with her apart from her clothes and some personal adornments. It was noted by Russell and Hiralal that :

171 428

> Succession among the Mundas passes to sons only. Failing there, the property goes to the father or brother if any..... Daughters get no share in the inheritance and are allotted among the sons just like livestock. Thus if a man dies leaving three sons and three daughters and thirty head of cattle, on a division each son would get ten head of cattle and one sister ; but should there be only one sister, they wait until she marries and divide the bride price.[1]

This quotation, from their article on the Kols, does not apply to the specific Kol tribe, but nevertheless we found instances of this tendency.

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There is a difference of opinion as to the disposition of the property if there are no sons and only girls in the family. In many places it was affirmed that property could pass to the daughters if there were no sons. This was always her own property and nothing could alienate it from her, not even her marriage. When such a girl is married she takes her property with her and such property is considered her own and does not become a portion of her husband's wealth. If she should ever leave his home due either to divorce or quarrel she still remains its owner. Keeping it thus in her name and under her control is a protection to her in case of need. At her death, such property, if still existing, is supposed to revert to her father's family, his brothers or their heirs. When a wife dies her clothes are disposed of as noted in Chapter VII. Her metal jewellery is kept and may be worn by a new wife or passed on to the sons.

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[1] Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. III, p. 518.

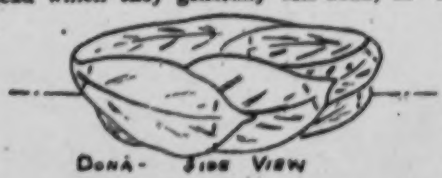
li Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

768 765 [302] by a Kol. Often all male members of the family are shaved in this manner. Nothing is done to the female mourners to correspond with this. Unkempt hair and dirty clothes are the signs of their mourning.

765 MOURNING FOR THE DEAD (*Daswi*). This may also be considered as the period of uncleanness, although many Kols do not recognize it as such. The number of days that the dead should be mourned, and certain taboos observed, varies according to sex and age. For a man or for a married youth the period is ten days, hence "*daswi*";—for a woman or a married maiden nine days; for a child it varies according to age: five days, three days, or, if it is a very small child there is no period of mourning at all. All over the area the customs are uniform [184] in the cases of men and women, but for children there seems to be a considerable variation of custom.

765 262 During the period of mourning certain foods are taboo and certain kinds of cooking vessels must not be used in the preparation of food. Only simple food should be eaten: nothing should therefore be cooked in *ghi* or oils. No salt or flesh of any kind should be taken. The cooking vessels which are taboo are those in which rich foods are prepared and cooked in oils and *ghi*, such as a frying pan. This rules out the cooking of *puris*. The food during that period must always be [264] eaten at home, and on no account should one accept food cooked in another's house or by someone who is not a member of the family, even if it is cooked in his own house. Violators of these regulations [623] are dealt with by the *panch*. One should also stay pretty close to home, and should not freely enter others' houses, especially at the time they are eating.

765 775 FEEDING THE DEAD. The Kols have a custom of feeding the dead which they generally call *dona*, or *dauna rakhna*. The dead should be fed twice daily during the period of mourning if one can afford it, and if not, once in the evening. This is discontinued after the funeral feast. The chief mourner is generally expected to prepare this food, or it may be prepared along with the ordinary household food. Such food is placed on a *dona*, leaf-plate, and is taken out from the house to a distance of from thirty to forty yards, in the direction of the graveyard. This is placed in the crotch of a tree or it may be set down on the ground. Other things may also be placed there, things the



DONA - SIDE VIEW

Fig. 23

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

departed liked best in life : sweets, tobacco, and the like. A little water is generally left too. They assert that liquor is never put out. As soon as the food is set out they quickly turn and do not look back lest they should disturb the eater. If the *masan* is not too far away the food may

DONĀ - LEAF PLATE ON WHICH THE DEAD ARE FED

Fig. 24

be placed on the grave. The usual procedure, though, is to place it near the old home. The belief is that the spirit of the deceased wanders about for ten days and frequents his old haunts. After ten days *dutas*, corresponding to angels, come for the soul and conduct it to another realm. The Kols seem to have no great fear of the spirits of their departed. Nothing is done to appease their anger, and they are thought to be in general kindly disposed toward their loved ones. There was some evidence of fear in a few cases where, they said, if the ashes are not deposited in the river the spirits might come and trouble them ; but this may be a part of another outlook. On the whole Kols regard their dead as kindly. The food, which they set out day by day, is consumed by birds or other animals. There is no special kind of food placed out, merely that used by them in the house during the time of mourning.

FUNERAL FEAST (*Din Pani*). If the deceased was a male the funeral feast occurs on the tenth day after the death, and if a female on the ninth day. The time of the feast after a child's death is not so uniform. Unless the child is grown up and rather important, it is not usual to have a feast ; or if there is one it is a private one within the home. But in the case of adults such a feast must always be given, otherwise the honour of the tribe would be tainted, and the family rebuked by the *panch*. On the morning of the feast preparations for it are made in the house.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

651 313 [233]

When the reserved forests are used there are certain fees that the Kols must pay. In Katni, along the Great Deccan Road, we found that the area of the house was considered for assessing the tax, and that the rate there was annas four per one hundred square feet of land area. In addition to this each family had to pay four annas per year for "sanitation". The standard rates for grazing cattle near Katni are as follows: buffalo Rs. 2-8-0 per year; cattle 0-12-0 to 1-4-0; goats 0-8-0 and to the shepherd who took them out daily annas four per head per year.

426 [171] [623]

Debt. Debt does not seem to be as heavy a burden upon Kols in British India as it is upon their Hindu neighbours. The normal debt of the Indian cultivator has been estimated to be well over two hundred rupees. The surveys we made among the Kols seem to indicate that most of them will be found to have small debts of one kind or another, but that it is not the heavy burden that is so often found in village India; also that the Kol *panchayats* or councils are active in discouraging indebtedness. Out of eleven Kol families questioned in Barela six indicated that they were in debt. The highest debt was Rs. 16/- and the total of the six amounted to only Rs. 42/-. This is much lower than one would expect. Debts were mostly acquired for clothes and marriages. They were made in the Barela bazaar and interest on them was paid at the rate of two pice per rupee per month, which is an interest rate of 37½%. On the other hand one Kol family reported that they made loans to farmers and others on good security and that they had about Rs. 300/- loaned out in that manner.

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It was sometimes the custom, in order to avoid debt at the time of marriage on the part of some poor family, for members of the village to subscribe one rupee per family to help defray the expenses. This was considered as a loan which would be paid back later without interest charges if the family was able. The heads of the Kharara Ghat families were questioned about debt. It was found that only three were really involved: one owed fifty rupees incurred by the purchase of a field and a wedding in the family; another ten rupees, also for a wedding and a third fifteen rupees for the same reason. In some other places such as Panagar and Deori, debt was found to be more common, and in Panagar the Kols who farmed land would often take as a loan an amount up to one-third of the expected produce of their lands. Usually the respective *panchayats* watch the matter of the indebtedness of the community quite closely and in some places money may not be borrowed without its consent. In the industrial and city centres indebtedness is quite common, much more so than

426 [623] [369]

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

426 under village conditions. Almost every time we were in the Kol
369 sections in and close to Jubbulpore we met Pathan money-lenders who were there to collect what they could of interest due to them. It
[178] appears that as Kols come into close contact with city life, their natural hesitation to acquire a debt is broken down, and money is taken as a loan which they have practically no expectation of being able to repay.

426 It should also not be overlooked that in some sections there is a state of perpetual debt on the part of the Kol villager. Money is not exactly borrowed—it is rather a gift which cannot be paid back, but which means a life-long obligation of service to the giver. This is particularly true of conditions in Rewa State and the more backward parts of the Central Provinces.

525 GAMBLING AND BEGGING. Some enquiries were also made concerning gambling. The *panchayat* allows it on certain festival
[623] days such as *Dewali* when all groups gamble, and also it is allowed occasionally in private. The gambling is not for large stakes and most communities seem to avoid it. At present the most popular form of gambling found mostly near cities is said to be with the use of playing cards. Under village conditions a block of wood is taken and on the six sides numbers are marked. These blocks are thrown somewhat in the manner of dice. Coins are also thrown, singly and in combination.

735 There are not many beggars among the Kols and we came across nothing of this type although the Census Report indicated that some were returned as "beggars, vagrants and prostitutes". When we made our enquiries they indicated that they felt a responsibility for those of their own group who were in need, and that they tried to care for such during the period of their dependency.

474 We did not find that they made use of co-operative societies, although in the case of Barela, there was one which they might have used. As
184 far as we were able to observe no active interest was taken in politics,
665 and none of the village Kols reported as ever having cast a ballot. It is otherwise with the Kols in Jubbulpore, for the Congress party has been very active and all who have been eligible have been recorded under its banner.

571 From many enquiries it is clear that among themselves, apart
575 from the *panchayat*, they have no clubs nor associations of any kind.

181 From the above survey of the economic conditions existing among
735 the Kols it will have been seen that they are among the poor and dis-